BBI3212 ENGLISH SYNTAX AND MORPHOLOGY

Topics

- What is morphology
- Difference between morphology and syntax
- Words and morphemes
- Word classes (syntactic categories of words)
- Classes of morphemes
- Constituents of words
- Representing the internal structure of words using tree diagrams and labeled bracketing
- Derivational and inflectional processes
- Word formation processes in English

SYNTAX AND MORPHOLOGY

- Morphology – study of words, its parts and rules that govern their combination
  - Words – what are the component parts of words, and the principles that govern the combination of these parts into whole words. Morphemes – smallest unit of sound and meaning, building blocks of words.

- Syntax – the study of how words, phrases and clauses are put together to form sentences
  - Sentences – analysed into its constituent parts, and the principles that govern the combination of these parts.

MORPHOLOGY (in linguistics)

- Study of words
- Classification of words
- How segments of words are put together
- Analysis of word structure
- Word formation processes

MORPHOLOGY

- Study of the structure of words:
  1. What are the component parts of words? (chop them up into the smallest parts you are able to do so (basic building blocks))
  2. How are these component parts put together to form the whole word? (put them together again – what principles or rules determine this?)

The LEXICON consists of words

- Separate items/words
  - i.e. table, meal, eat, ate, go, happy, unhappy, operation, national, headhunter, etc

- Words formed from basic words
  - Through application of certain rules to basic words
  - e.g. time table, meals, jogging, undergo, unhappy, etc
Which of the following is correct (in English)?

- Oldest
- Bestest
- Cleverest
- Spoonest
- Soonest

How did you know?

Identify the word categories (syntactic categories) of the words in RED

T'was brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe
All mimsy were the borogoves
And the mome raths outgrabe
(Lewis Carrol, "Through the Looking Glass", 1993, p. 21)

You know:
- The syntactic categories of words (nouns, adjectives etc) and word order
- Which words are content words (lexical category) and which are function words (non-lexical category)
- Rules of word formation such as affixation e.g. one book, two books => one tove, two toves
e.g. adjective: funny, sleepy => slithy, mimsy
- Roots and bases of words: hats => raths

You know:
- What is a word?
- The smallest free form found in language
  - I am over here.
  - Here I am.
  - She's as good as I.
- I, here, as, am, good, she's, over = words

Words can occur in isolation and/or in different positions in a sentence

Compare with non-words
- The work is unfinished.
- The work is *finished

un-, -ed are not words. They must be attached to another form, in a fixed/regular manner.

Their positions within a word are fixed.

Lexical categories / meaning or content words
- Nouns
- Verbs
- Adjectives
- Adverbs

Lexical words are open-class words
Give examples for each of the above categories
**Non-lexical (functional) categories /grammatical words**
- Auxiliaries – is, have, could
- Intensifiers/qualifiers – very, quite, pretty, more, rather, ever so, often, hardly, perhaps, quite
- Prepositions – above, behind, in, for, of, under
- Conjunctions – and, or, so, as, but

Prepositions and modal auxiliaries may be regarded as functional or lexical. Non-lexical words are closed-class words.

**Tests/Criteria for Determining a Word's Category**

- **The meaning of the word** – **Meaning Test/Semantic**
  - Nouns – name things, persons, animals, places or concepts
    - table, Ali, dream, happiness, Kuala Lumpur, monkey
  - Verbs – refer to actions/processes and states
    - kick, jump, be, like, feel, have
  - Adjectives – describes the property of nouns
    - beautiful girl, bad wolf

- **Sentence-slot test** – **Distribution Test/Syntactic**
  - Table, a table = can co-occur with a determiner = NOUN
  - will table, should table = can co-occur with modals before it = VERB

- **Word suffix test** – **Inflection Test/Morphological**
  - Table → tabl-ed, tabl-ing = takes the past tense suffix (-ed) and the progressive suffix (-ing) = VERB
  - Table → tabl-ing = takes the plural suffix (-s) = NOUN

**Adverbs** – modifies the meaning of a verb, adjective or another adverb
- read loudly (modifies verb)
- read really loudly (modifies adverb, also called intensifier)
- extremely sad (modifies adjective)
**Words – Syntactic Categories**

**Distribution Test**

- **Tests for Noun**
  - Attach a determiner (e.g. article, adjective, possessive pronoun)
    - the boy, silly girl — sounds OK: 'boy', 'girl' are probably nouns
  - his girl — 'girl' is a noun
  - silly little girl — 'little' is not a noun. But then you can’t say ‘silly little’. It has to be 'silly little girl'.

**Inflection Test (Suffix Test)**

- **Tests for Verbs**
  - Add suffix -ed to get past tense form
    - Walked — past tense of 'walk': 'walk' is probably a verb
  - Grow — no such word. Try another test.
    - Add suffix -ing to get present participle form.
      - Growing — 'grow' probably a verb.

**Distribution Test**

- **Tests for Verbs**
  - Add a modal in front of the word: can grow, will grow: 'grow' is a verb.
    - 'terror' — will terror (nope). 'terror' is not a verb.

**Morphemes**

**Remember This?**

- Study of the structure of words:
  1. What are the component parts of words?
     - (chop them up into the smallest parts you are able to do so (basic building blocks))
  2. How are these component parts put together to form the whole word?
    - (put them together again – what principles or rules determine this?)

- **A Morpheme — The Smallest Unit of Language That Carries Information About Meaning or Grammatical Function**
  - postman -> post + man (2 morphemes) (√)
  - think -> th + ink (X) (not 2 morphemes)

- **Two Categories of Morphemes**
  - Free
  - Bound
MORPHEMES

Free Morphemes
- A morpheme that can be a word by itself
  - E.g. Good, fox, joy
  - Good, fox, joy => simple words (single morpheme/simplex)
  - Foxes, joyous => complex words (two or more morphemes)
Free morphemes can be open-class or closed-class depending on whether they are lexical or non-lexical words.

Bound Morphemes
- A morpheme that must be attached to another element
  - E.g. Foxes (-es), joyous (-ous)
Bound morphemes are closed-class.

4 POINTS ABOUT MORPHEMES
1. Morphemes are not syllables.
   - e.g. ‘forest’ has 2 syllables, but 1 morpheme
   - ‘birds’ has one syllable, but 2 morphemes
2. Identical spellings/sounds do not indicate identical morphemes
   - e.g. The morpheme –er in seller vs taller
     one who ‘sells’ to a greater degree
3. There are exceptions to the general rule that a morpheme carries a more or less constant meaning realised by a more or less constant form.
   - e.g. [boy] + [PLU] = boys
     but [man] + [PLU] = men, not *mans
     and [ox] + [PLU] = oxen, not *oxes
4. Morpheme boundaries in words may shift and meanings of morphemes may change over time.
   - e.g. historically, ‘hamburger’ originated from Hamburg + er
   - Nowadays, it is analysed as Ham + burger as evidenced by the existence of similar words ‘cheeseburger’, ‘fishburger’ etc.

How many morphemes do these words have?
- Water
- Hunt
- Ladylike
- Operate
- Crocodile
- Inoperative
- Prank
- Singer
Which are simple words/ complex words?

SUMMARY – CLASSES OF WORDS

WORDS
- LEXICAL/CONTENT WORDS
- NON-LEXICAL/FUNCTION WORDS
NOUNS
VERBS
ADJECTIVES
ADVERBS
PREPOSITIONS
CONJUNCTIONS
AUXILIARIES
INTENSIFIERS/QUALIFIERS

Open-class
Closed-class
SUMMARY – CLASSES OF WORDS

WORDS

Words are made up of morphemes

SINGLE/MONO MORPHEMIC (SIMPLE WORDS)

POLY-MORPHEMIC (COMPLEX WORDS)

SUMMARY – CLASSES OF MORPHEMES

MORPHEME

FREE

BOUND

WORDS

PREFIX

SUFFIX

OVERVIEW – CLASSES OF MORPHEMES

MORPHEME

FREE

BOUND

CLOSED-CLASS

LEXICAL (OPEN CLASS)

NON-LEXICAL (CLOSED CLASS)

PREFIXES

SUFFIXES

BOUND BASES

CLITICS

EXERCISE

• Give two examples of morphemes for each of the categories and subcategories shown in the previous slide.

• Explain the difference between classes of morphemes on the same level as shown in the diagram.

REPRESENTING WORD STRUCTURE

MORPHEMES /CONSTITUENTS OF WORDS

• ROOTS
  - Root morpheme - carries the major meaning of the word
  - They are mostly morphemes of the Lexical category
  - E.g. Darken → Dark = root

• AFFIXES
  - Non lexical category
  - Bound morphemes
  - E.g. Darken → -en = affix

• BASES
  - A form to which an affix is added
  - E.g. Darken → base for the affix -en is Dark
  - E.g. Darkened → base for the affix -ed is Dark
Constituent Structure

- How are words structured? How are morphemes put together to form words?

REPRESENTING WORD STRUCTURE

MORPHEMES / CONSTITUENTS OF WORDS

Words are not structured merely by adding on blocks of morphemes in a linear fashion from left to right; there is also hierarchical structure.

Which diagram more closely represents what speakers know about word structure?

REPRESENTATION – TREE DIAGRAM

Representing the internal structure of WORDS

- TEACHER
  
  Root and base for -er
  
  N
  
  V Af
  
  teach er

- UNHAPPY
  
  Root and base for -un-
  
  A
  
  A
  
  [un[happy]_A]
  
  Af
  
  un happy

- OPERATIONAL
  
  Root and base for -ion
  
  A
  
  N
  
  V Af Af
  
  operate ion al

- UNUSEABLE
  
  Root and base for -un-
  
  A
  
  Af
  
  V Af
  
  un use able
Questions

- Indicate whether the underlined words are roots or bases to the affixes.
  - Unhappy
  - Taller
  - Pretest
  - Activation
  - Straightener

Questions

- Add as many affixes as are appropriate to the following roots/bases. State the syntactic categories of the root/base and the new word after affixation.
  - Care – V → careful A
  - Disinfect – V → disinfection N
  - List – V → listed –V, listing(s) N
  - Corrupt – A → corruption – N
  - Terror – N → terrorist – N
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